

For Immediate Release

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Hope For Healing and Live4Lali Launch Mobile Outreach Program in West Chicago to Prevent Opioid Overdoses and Link People to Care

Willowbrook, Ill. --- February 10, 2022 --- Hope For Healing and Live4Lali announce that its Mobile Outreach Program (MOP) has expanded into West Chicago. Starting tomorrow, February 11, 2022, the Mobile Outreach Program's truck, The Stigma Crusher, will be available Fridays from 2:00 pm - 4:00 pm at St. Andrew's Lutheran Church located at 155 North Prince Crossing Road, West Chicago, IL 60185. Staff and volunteers will distribute the overdose reversal drug NARCAN (known by its generic name, naloxone) and fentanyl test strips, provide education and linkage to care. The program will also distribute food, toiletries, clothing, and other basic needs.

In a joint statement, Live4Lali's Executive Director, Laura Fry, and Hope for Healing Co-Founder/Program Director Steve Stefani said, "We believe that harm reduction services are an essential part of the continuum of care for people suffering from substance use disorders. We see a need for these services in DuPage and are thankful to the HOPE Task Force and the DuPage County Board for granting funding that has helped us meet this need. We are excited to get out on the street and provide services for people who both need and deserve our help."

Overdoses have been on the rise in the Chicagoland area for years. According to the DuPage County Coroner's Office, 96 people died from a drug overdose in 2019, with a 17% increase in 2020 to 112 drug overdose deaths. West Chicago is among other communities across DuPage County experiencing heightened overdose rates. "There is a lack of access to services, and overdose numbers have gotten worse in the last few years. We are seeing this in our community. The need for harm reduction services is more pronounced now due to trends all over the country and within our community. We want to be part of these efforts because they save lives. As people of faith, we want to reach out to families and individuals who are struggling," said St. Andrew's Pastor Josh Ebener.

"The sad reality is that far too many people do not have access to harm reduction services in their area," said State Senator Karina Villa. "I hope that bringing in harm reduction mobile units will expand professional and group support towards prevention, treatment, and recovery resources and provide drug-based education."

The MOP will be available in other DuPage locations in the coming months and currently serves Evanston, McHenry, Waukegan, and Woodstock. The organizations offer free overdose prevention training, naloxone, fentanyl test strips, and other safe supplies. Community members can order safe supplies for free at bit.ly/l4lsupplies. To learn more about the program, visit live4lali.org/harmreductionoutreach/.

Sheriff James Mendrick said, "We're all in this together. Mental health is a big problem in DuPage County, especially since COVID. We have a full continuum of care that starts with withdrawal management, mental health education, jobs, and reentry. We need outside resources like the MOP to help with the continuum of care upon release from correctional facilities. We don't want all of those efforts and work to go to waste, so we need ways to follow up with these people outside the correctional facility's walls. The harm reduction mobile unit has some of these resources to provide people who are struggling with continued drug addiction challenges and mental health problems."

About Hope For Healing and Live4Lali:

Hope for Healing works to prevent the harms of substance use disorders, such as disease and death, and foster respect and dignity for those living with its effects. Based in Willowbrook, the organization supports people who use drugs and their families, linkage to treatment and recovery services, and harm reduction education and supply distribution. Learn more at Hope-For-Healing.org.

Live4Lali is a nonprofit that works to reduce stigma and prevent substance use disorder among individuals, families, and communities and minimize the overall health, legal, and social harms associated with substance use. Based in Arlington Heights and serving the collar counties of Chicago since 2009, Live4Lali provides lifesaving services, including recovery support, harm reduction, advocacy, and education. Learn more at Live4Lali.org.

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